viz media

R.O.D

READ OR DIE

Story by
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Art by
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Vol. 3

R.O.D

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I...

HURRY UP! GET THEM DOWN NOW!

...I SHOULD GO BACK.

EVEN AFTER WHAT I SAID...

WAAA!

BRING SOME HOT WATER!

THAT'S IT! FASTER!!

OH... NO.

SHUF

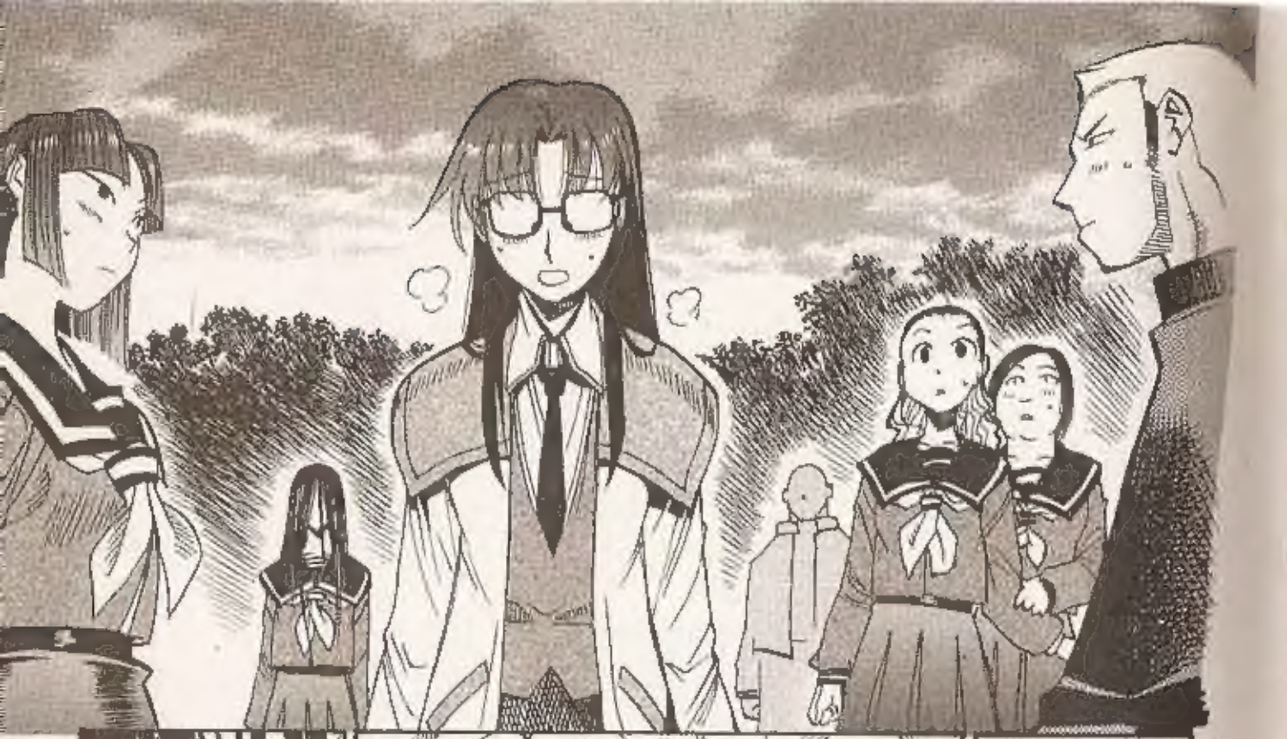
SHUF

BLINK BLINK

...

MORNING ?

EPISODE ONE



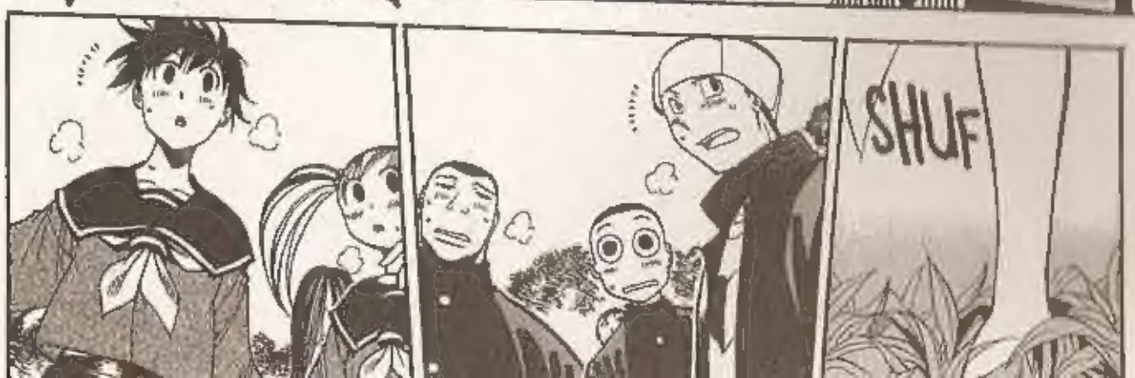
HFF
HFF
HF

WE'LL DEAL WITH THIS OUR-SELVES.

THOSE GIRLS ARE WITH US.

SNAP
GET AWAY FROM THEM!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE A STUDENTS WENT THIS FAR!
FOUND IT! HERE'S THE FIRST AID KIT!
THAT'S NOT GONNA DO US ANY GOOD! WE NEED MORE!
THEY'RE REALLY IN PAIN. SOMEBODY DO SOME-THING!
HANG ON! HANG IN THERE!


SHUF

THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL!

...

THAT'S NOT IT...

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'D WANT TO HELP US.

BUT IF YOU'RE STILL A TEACHER ...

...IF YOU'RE STILL *OUR* TEACHER ...

I JUST...

...PLEASE HELP.

SN IF

HUH?

YOUR LITTLE GOOD-LUCK CHARMS WON'T HELP.

WE DON'T NEED HER PITY... OR HER STUPID SENSE OF DUTY.

WE'RE JUST WORTHLESS B STUDENTS.

SHE'S A TEACHER!

SHE'S NOTHING!

NO, NO. YOMIKO IS...

B CLASS DOESN'T NEED YOU...

...ANYMORE!

FOUND THE BAND-AGES ...

UGH!!

...!

TEACH-ER!

WERE YOU CRYING?

PLEASE HELP THESE GIRLS.

HURRY!

NO, NO! THAT'S NOT...

WE'RE SO HOPE-LESS...

...

THAT'S ENOUGH.

COME ON! DON'T CRY!

SOB...

IT'S OUR FAULT. WE BELIEVED IN YOU AND THE DREAM YOU GAVE US...

COME OUT!

COW-ARDS!

YOU CAN PICK ON SCHOOLGIRLS, BUT *I'M* NOT AFRAID OF YOU!

COME... OUT...

SNIF

SNIF

I'M BURNING ALL OVER ...

HEE HEE ...

BAM

COME OUT OF THERE!

WHY WOULD YOU DO SUCH A THING?

HOW COULD YOU?

SNIF

SNIF

SNIF

SNIF

SNIF

D O O M

JOY. ANGER. PLEASURE. SORROW.

WE CAN USE THE FOUR BASIC EMOTIONS TO DRAW OUT THE BEAST.

WHAT DRIVES LIVING THINGS? EMOTION!

THE LIBRARY IS ALIVE.

A PERSON, BUT NOT A PERSON.

A BOOK, BUT NOT A BOOK.

IT HAS NO APPETITE FOR ORDINARY HUMANS.

IT NEEDS A GOURMET FEAST.

A PERSON WHOSE SPIRIT RESEMBLES THE BOOKS IT DEVOURS.

YOMIKO READMAN.

THE PAPER.

WE NOW HAVE TWO CARDS TO PLAY...

...WHAT CARDS?

UM, THANKS, BUT...

...THANKS TO YOU, IRAKA.

EVEN FROM THIS DISTANCE, MY WHOLE BODY IS TINGLING.

B A D D O O M

YOUR ANGER IS SIMPLY *SCORCHING*, YOMIKO.

HEE HEE.

THEY'RE THE KEYS THAT WILL UNLOCK THE CHASTITY BELT OF OUR FRIGID LADY, THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY.

PLEASURE...

THAT LEAVES TWO MORE. ULTIMATE PLEASURE AND INCOMPARABLE SORROW.

...

SHUF SHUF

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?

WHAT WILL YOU USE THEM FOR, TEACHER?

...

WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING FOR?

WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?

SNUP

TEACH-ER!

AM I ALLOWED TO WANT THE SAME THING?

SNIK

...SHE DANCES?

SAY, DID YOU KNOW ...

SHE'S GOT SUCH A POWERFUL CONNECTION TO PAPER..

...THAT SHE DANCES WITH IT LIKE SHE'S WALTZING.

ROUND AND ROUND.

ROUND AND ROUND.

YES, SHE'S A SPECIAL DISH.

THERE'S NO ONE QUITE LIKE HER IN HISTORY.

THE PAPER'S DESTINY IS TO BECOME THE MASTER OF BOOKS.

TWO CARDS ARE IN PLAY. THE DREAMY JOY...

...AND THE BURNING ANGER.

...BEEN CONSUMED.

THAT JOY HAS ALREADY ...

OH...

TEACH-ER..

ON THE FIRST PAGE...

...WE WILL WRITE ABOUT YOU.

...THAT PERSON WILL NOT BE IN IT!

WHEN WE WRITE THE STORY OF THE NEW WORLD...

ONE MORE TIME...

MAY WE...

BUT ONE THING MUST CHANGE.

EVERY-THING IS AS IT SHOULD BE.

...AND MOVE FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE.

WE MUST END THIS FARCE...

NOT AT ALL. YOUR PASSION IS A GOOD THING.

SORRY. I GOT A LITTLE EMOTIONAL ...

...INTO A NEW WORLD, A BOOK WHERE THE PAGES ARE STIL- BLANK!

IT'S A SMALL WINDOW, BUT WE CAN JUMP THROUGH ...

I HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH!

I'M AN AUTHOR.

SHAAAA

DONNIE...

I CAN'T TAKE IT...

...ANY-MORE.

GOOD.

THE FEVER'S GOING DOWN.

SKRF

SKRF

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS ACADEMY.

IF THEY'RE FEELING BETTER, WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE TOMORROW MORNING.

TEACH-ER?

NENENE, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

SHA

A

COME OUT NOW!

SHIFF

!

YO-YO

SHAA

HUH?

...

...YOMIKO.

YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME...

TH

WOP

TH

WOP

WHAT?

!?

TH

WOP

STOP HIDING IN THE SHADOWS!

CHI SHIN

THWOP

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO ATTACKED THOSE GIRLS?

I HATE EVERY-ONE!

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!

I WANT OUT!

SHE WENT THIS WAY ...

!

DONNIE, SOME-THING IS...

DONNIE?

...FOR THE MISSION AND THE STUDENTS.

BUT ...

... WHY ?

I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN...

...

DONNIE, WHY? WHY DID YOU...

WHY?

WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS?

EPISODE TWO

MAN, JUST WHEN I WAS GETTIN' STARTED.

I'VE GOTTA FIND A BODY.

CHIEF

SORRY, BUD. NOTHING PERSONAL.

ORDERS WERE TO AVOID ANY INTER-ACTION.

...

SHIT.

UGH...

UGH... OOH.

ZWAAA

AND BRING SOME DRY CLOTHES!

GET A TOWEL OR SOME-THING!

HEY, NENENE ...

WHERE'S YOMIKO?

THAT'LL BE GOOD.

WENDY... MY GYM CLOTHES ...

...

YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL. YOU'LL CATCH COLD...OR WORSE.

WHERE'S HARADA?

YEAH. HE SHOULD BE BACK BY NOW!

NENENE ?

HEY...

...

!

NENENE!

EPISODE TWO

WENDY! WHERE AM I?

SUMI-REGAWA ?

HEY! SUMI-REGAWA!

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

——?

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

——

UGH.

HEY, YOU WAKING UP?

PROBABLY NOT A GOOD TIME TO MENTION HER.

WHO ARE YOU?

A PASSER-BY.

I'LL TAKE YOU NEAR THE SCHOOL CAMPUS, BUT DON'T TELL ANYBODY YOU SAW ME.

JUST FORGET ME.

WERE YOU OUT HERE PLAYING SOME KIND OF WAR GAME?

I SAID FORGET IT.

HMPH. A GAME!

...!

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT YOMIKO?

...

SHOULD WE LOOK FOR HIM?

BUT THE A STUDENTS ARE STILL OUT THERE.

!

FORGET ABOUT HER.

JUST...

...FORGET HER.

THAT'S IT. IT WAS ALL A BLUFF...

JUST LIKE KAZUTO...

I'LL KEEP FIGHTING UNTIL I WIN.

TO THE END !!

YEAH, BUT HE'S A FRIEND. HE'S JUST LOST HIS HEAD.

THAT THE GUY YOU WERE FIGHTING ?

DON'T LET HIM GET THE BEST OF YOU.

YA GOTTA SNAP HIM OUT OF IT.

THANKS FOR THE LIFT.

HOW ABOUT YOU? GET GANGED UP ON?

NO!

WAR IS NOT A GAME.

...

SOME CREEP.

JUST A FIGHT.

I HAVE TO DRESS LIKE THIS. JUST WALKING OUTDOORS SCARES ME.

I'M JUST A WIMP.

SO IT'S JUST A BLUFF.

JUST LIKE HIM!

NOTHING GOOD EVER COMES OUT OF FIGHTS.

THAT'S GREAT ADVICE FROM A GUY IN FATIGUES.

YOU WANT TO GO BACK?

SIF

THERE'S NO TURNING BACK NOW.

YOU MEAN THE TERRIBLE "CALCULATION" ?

EVERYTHING'S JUST AS THE TEACHER SAID.

EACH DAY DYING A LITTLE MORE...

YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO THAT?

TRAPPED AT HOME WITH YOUR PARENTS...

I...

DWOOM

DWOOM

LOOK WHO'S TALKING.

...

WELL, WELL. AREN'T YOU SERENE?

!

I HAVE TO FINISH THIS TODAY.

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE B STUDENTS ?

THEY'RE HOLED UP IN THEIR BUILDING LIKE FRIGHTENED RATS.

SWOOP !!!

THE B STUDENTS MUST BE SACRIFICED SO WE CAN ADVANCE INTO THE FUTURE.

IF YOU'VE GOT ANY FOND MEMORIES, TOSS THEM! RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW!

UGH!

SK OF

OR YOU'LL PAY FOR THEM TOMORROW.

GET THEM! EVERY LAST ONE!

HUNT THEM DOWN!

THAT MEANS ALL OF THEM, GOT IT? EVEN THE ONES YOU THOUGHT WERE FRIENDS.

I'M NEVER GOING BACK!

I'M NEVER GOING BACK EITHER!

I WAS JUST TH NKING OUT LOUD.

SH OO

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

SLAM

!!

FIRST IT WAS CAVE WALLS. THEN BONES, WOOD BARK, STONE TABLETS, PAPYRUS.

FINALLY, MAN USED PAPER TO RECORD AND SHARE HIS KNOWLEDGE.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINTING PRESS ENABLED BOOK PRODUCTION ON A MASSIVE SCALE.

ALL OF HUMANITY'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS ARE BUILT FROM THE CORNERSTONE OF BOOKS.

BOOKS ARE BORN FROM KNOWLEDGE, AND THEY ELEVATE MANKIND.

THEY HAVE BECOME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.

WELL, TRUE OR NOT, I KNOW I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT BOOKS.

HA HA...

SO I ASK YOU, YOMIKO...

WE MUST CONTINUE, FOR THE FUTURE OF MANKIND!

WE AREN'T.

KR AK

NORMAL IS NOT ENOUGH.

...IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SAVING THE LAST BOOK IN THE WORLD OR A DROWNING PERSON...

...WHICH WOULD YOU SAVE?

BUT... THE BOOK, TOO.

THE PERSON, OF COURSE ...

EH...

UM...

THAT'S THE NORMAL ANSWER.

IT'S GOT TO BE THE PERSON, THOUGH. RIGHT?

...

BUT WHAT'S NORMAL?

AH, YOU TRULY ARE HONEST.

THE OBVIOUS ANSWER IS NOT SO CLEAR.

I WANT TO GO BACK TO THAT TIME.

DONNIE, PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU!

WE CAN LIVE OUR LIVES TOGETHER, READING BOOKS!

WHAT ABOUT ...

ALL I NEED TO BE HAPPY ARE BOOKS AND YOU.

I'LL QUIT!

...YOUR MISSION?

I'LL LEAVE EVERY-THING...

AND THE STU-DENTS ?

chif

I JUST HAD A DREAM.

HFF

...

ABOUT WHAT?

I FELT REALLY HAPPY...

THE SUN WAS WARM AND THERE WERE LOTS OF BOOKS.

I WAS IN A CLASS-ROOM AND YOU WERE TEACHING.

WHAT A SLEAZE! WE HATE YOU!

TALK ABOUT NERVE!

UNBELIEVABLE !!

HA...

!!

SOME TEACHERS REALLY SUCK.

I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.

DONNIE ?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY TEACHER!

PINK

WHAT IS THIS?

WHAT?

PINK

I JUST WANT BOOKS ...

...AND YOU.

LOUSY TEACHER!

!?

YOU ABANDONED US...

...TO SHACK UP WITH SOME OLD BOY-FRIEND.

WE RELIED ON YOU. WE NEED YOU!

HARADA ?

GA

GA

GA

DONNIE? DONNIE!

SHF...

COME OUT, DONNIE

DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE!

I HAVE A MUCH DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM THAN YOU COULD UNDERSTAND.

MENTALLY *AND* PHYSICALLY.

SLID

HEE HEE HEE...

HA HA HA HA!

HE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT HOW ***SHAMELESS*** YOU ARE.

YOU'D DIG IN GARBAGE LIKE A GROVELING DOG JUST FOR A BOOK.

D 'OO. M'

DONNIE ...

WHERE ARE YOU?

...

TEACH-ER...

JAK

JAK

AK

!!

OH, NO! THIS IS THE BIGGEST ONE YET!

JAKA

JAKA

THE SCREAMING!

SHO

TIME FOR OUR CURTAIN CALL!

!!

YOU HEAR IT, DON'T YOU?

THAT VOICE CALLING YOU FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH!

AUGH!

JAKA

JAKA

I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU! I'M GOING TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH YOU REFUSE TO FACE!

THE GREATEST STORY OF ALL TIME HAS BLURRED REALITY!

AK

HARADA!

JAK

JAK

THIS IS A BAD ONE...

YOU BETRAYED ME...

hff

hff

I BELIEVED IN YOU...

hff

SH

F

HOW?

HOW?

...DO SUCH A THING?

WHY? HOW COULD YOU...

SUMI-REGAWA ...

EPISODE THREE

KRUNCH!

JAKA JAKA

HEAR THE VOICE SCREAMING FROM DEEP IN YOUR BLOOD.

THE SCREAMING!

GRRP

YOMIKO!

JAKA JAKA JAKA

I'LL SHOW YOU ALL!! THE NAKED TRUTH YOU'VE BLINDED YOURSELVES TO!

THE GREATEST STORY OF ALL TIME HAS BLURRED REALITY.

GRRP

YOUR CRIME!

GRRP

JA

AA

THAT'S NOT... I'M NOT...

...

I AM RIDLEY WAN!

REMEMBER ME, YOMIKO?

!!

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IN YOUR CONSCIENCE.

OF COURSE YOU DO.

DRIP

YOUR CRIME !!!

EPISODE THREE

DO

RIDLEY'S STORY...

I AM DESIRE INCARNATE!

BURY ME DEEP IN THE EARTH, AND MY DESIRE WILL STILL RISE AND SCORCH THE HEAVENS.

AH...

AH...

SHFF SHFF

BY FONDLING JUST A SINGLE SHEET OF PAPER..

...WE CAN FULFILL OUR FATE AS PAPER MASTERS.

THE STORY OF THAT FATEFUL DAY...

M

STOP IT! STOP SPEAKING WITH DONNIE'S VOICE!

DONNIE...

DONN E... OH, DONNIE...

HNH

!!

IT'S TOO LATE TO SHUT YOUR EYES AGAIN...

...YOMIKO.

BWA HA HA!

DONNIE!

SH

IN

TOUCHING YOU DOES NOTHING FOR ME.

MY DES RE IS QUITE THE OPPOSITE!

YES, YOU MAKE ME BURN WITH DESIRE.

BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE!

SHOON SHOON

FOOD WILL NOW BE PROVIDED.

TO HELL WITH THIS "SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROACH" ...

SHALL WE LEAVE YOU HERE AWHILE TO PONDER?

YOU NEARLY KILLED YOUR PARTNER DURING THE TRAINING EXERCISES.

IT'S YOU!

FOOD!

UGH...

GO AHEAD. EAT!

SHOOF

LIBRARY OF ENGLAND, SPECIAL OPERATIONS DIVISION

UNDER-GROUND TRAINING FACILITY

REVIEW BOARD

UNH...

HUNH...

SON OF A ...

1980S

ENGLAND

HMPH.

GRMPH.

GLOMP

AWW...

CRAP!

HFF HFF

WHAT IS THIS CRAP? OUCH!

KANK

OH, YEAH?

HA HA. YOUR NEIGHBOR. I'M DOING THE SAME TRAINING AS YOU.

WHO ARE YOU?

ARE YOU IN PAIN?

...

!?

OFF

YOU!

!!

WUP

YOU PUNKS ARE PROPERTY OF THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND, BOUGHT AND SOLD.

UGH

WAP

YOU'LL EAT MY WORDS BEFORE YOU TOUCH ANY FOOD!

YOU'LL DEFY THE RULES JUST TO SATISFY AN EMPTY STOMACH?

WILL YOU?

WAP

D O O M

IF WE CAN'T USE YOU, WE'LL THROW YOU OUT WITH THE OTHER TRASH.

JAPAN.

I WAS BOUGHT IN HONG KONG. HOW 'BOUT YOU?

MY ORPHANAGE SOLD ME.

ARE PEOPLE THERE SO POOR THEY SELL THEIR CHILDREN?

GEEZ.

YOU'RE THE ULTIMATE NICE GUY.

THE MONEY THEY GOT FOR ME WILL ENSURE THAT THE REST NEVER STARVE.

DONNIE NAKAJIMA.

...

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

NICE TO MEET YOU, RIDLEY..

RIDLEY WAN.

HE BROKE A RIB, SO I STOPPED FIGHTING.

IF I'D HIT HIM AGAIN, THE BONE COULD'VE PIERCED AN ORGAN.

I DIDN'T FINISH OFF MY TRAINING PARTNER WHEN I COULD'VE.

HUH?

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE RULES AND REGULATIONS.

BUT IT WAS JUST TRAINING. THAT'S NOT AN OFFENSE.

IT WAS A CRIME TO ME.

NO. IT IS.

NO, WE'RE LESS THAN WORMS.

WE'RE WORMS HERE. I HATE IT!

THIS HELL IS TOO PITIFUL FOR TEARS.

ISN'T IT KILL OR BE KILLED?

HOW DO YOU TRAIN FOR THAT?

...

IS THAT WHY YOU ALMOST KILLED YOUR PARTNER?

WHAT DID YOU DO TO LAND HERE?

...

I DID THE OPPO-SITE.

GRP

AND THEY SAY MINDLESS VIOLENCE HAS NO MEANING!

GET REAL!

THE "MIND" ADDS NOTHING TO RAW, PURE VIOLENCE!

DON'T YOU LIKE BOOKS?

PORN'S OKAY.

AT THE ORPHANAGE, THERE WAS NO TIME TO READ AND NO MONEY FOR BOOKS.

THIS PLACE IS HORRIBLE, BUT AT LEAST THERE ARE BOOKS TO READ.

HA HA!

ACTUALLY, THAT'S MY FAVORITE, TOO.

HA HA HA

FOR SOME REASON...

...WHEN I TALKED TO DONNIE, THE PAIN DISAPPEARED.

DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS TRAINING CAN BRING OUT LATENT POWERS?

Go. TO HELL, GENTLEMAN.

Burn in

Go. TO

DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAY?

SHHH

YOU SERIOUS? A BOOK IS JUST A WAD OF PAPER.

YES, AND A PERSON IS JUST A WAD OF FLESH.

...IT WOULD BE TRULY WONDER-FUL.

I DON'T KNOW.

BUT IF PEOPLE AND BOOKS COULD BE UNITED AS THEY SAY ...

I LOVE BOOKS.

I'VE BET A MONTH'S SALARY ON YOU.

WOOM

TODAY, ATTACK LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO KILL!

GOT THAT, RIDLEY ?

.....

YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING SPECIAL. NOW MAKE ME SOME MONEY!

HMPH.

SLUK

REALLY GIVE IT TO...

VENGEANCE

TREAT THIS AS REAL COMBAT. LOSING HERE MEANS LOSING YOUR LIFE.

GET READY! THIS IS THE FINAL TEST OF YOUR TRAINING!

WE'LL SHOW EACH OF YOU A CARD WITH A WORD ON IT.

YOUR ATTACK POINTS ON YOUR RIVAL WILL BE THE LETTERS OF THE WORDS.

YOU HAVE ONE CHANCE, AND ONE CHANCE ONLY.

THE FIRST TO SPELL THEIR WORD WILL BE THE WINNER.

VOOM

LET ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF MANKIND FLOW THROUGH YOUR BODY!

UNDERSTAND THE WORD! BECOME THE MEANING!

SWOP

POW

KING

FIGHT!!!

LOOKS ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS ME.

A WESTERNER, HUH? HAVEN'T SEEN HIM BEFORE.

THEN I SAW MY CHANCE.

SMASH!!

AAAA

SCORE: F!

WOOSH

UGH

HE WAS QUICK!

I MIS-JUDGED.

I LET OUTWARD APPEARANCES DECEIVE ME.

DAMN!

WA-HOO!

BUT IF HE GETS MY "I," IT'LL BREAK MY RIB.

IT'LL KILL ME.

HUH

F-R-I-E-N-D-S-H...

ALL I NEED ARE C AND E.

HE'LL BE GOING FOR THE "I" NEXT.

YES, SIR.

THE NEXT BLOW WILL END THE CONTEST.

FIGHT!

READY ...

D O O M

LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE A SERIOUS MATCH.

WELL, WELL ...

NO. IT'S A DEATH-MATCH!

TRAINING IS FINISHED !

STOP FIGHTING !!!

THE WINNER IS RIDLEY WAN!

IF I HIT YOU THERE, IT'S A CRIME ...

HEY, YOU! WHY'D YOU HESITATE? YOU TRYING TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME?

GRP

RIDLEY, BACK OFF! IT'S OVER!

ANSWER ME!

HE MISSED!

!!

KRAK

KRAK

KRAK

SCORE: C AND E!

I WAS GOING TO KILL HIM.

URK

ATTACK!

DONNIE?

YES, RIDLEY. IT'S ME.

BA

M!!

TAK

IT... IT'S YOU!

IF I HIT YOU, IT WOULD WRECK OUR FRIENDSHIP.

UM ...

MIND YOUR MANNERS, YOMIKO READMAN!

MR. JOKER !!

DO YOU KNOW WHERE DONNIE'S GONE?

OH, UM... EXCUSE ME.

REALLY?

I BELIEVE DONNIE IS IN THE INNER COURTYARD.

YOU AND DONNIE NAKAJIMA HAVE COMPLETED THE SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROACH TRAINING.

ONE OF YOU WILL BE SELECTED AS OUR NEXT AGENT, "THE PAPER."

BOTH OF YOU ARE NOW ACCREDITED "PAPER MASTERS."

WHY IS THAT?

...

IS THAT SO? AND YOU DON'T?

HE LOVES BOOKS.

!

...

CHOOSE HIM. I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR IT.

WHAT DRIVES THAT CAPABILITY DOES NOT CONCERN US.

THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND IS SEEKING A POWERFUL PAPER MASTER.

HMPH

FRANKLY, I DON'T CARE WHO TAKES THE POSITION.

CER- TAINLY AH, YES.. THE PAPER

I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BECOME THE PAPER.

FINE. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE SUITED FOR IT, ANYWAY.

...OR, OF COURSE, HATE.

IT COULD BE LOVE ...

EVERY WORLD HAS AN UNDERWORLD. EVERY UNDERWORLD HAS ITS DARKNESS.

IN THE SHADOWS OF THE DARKNESS LIES A RUTHLESS VILLAIN, A PHANTOM WITH FEROCIOUS POWER.

WHAT?

THAT REMINDS ME. DONNIE IS...

...

SO SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION. SHE'S AN APPRENTICE.

THEY SAY SHE AND DONNIE HAVE HIT IT OFF.

YES, A NICE LITTLE ROMANCE HAS BLOSSOMED IN OUR FOREST OF BOOKS.

CAN WE MOVE ON?

DONNIE EVEN REQUESTED TO INSTRUCT HER HIMSELF.

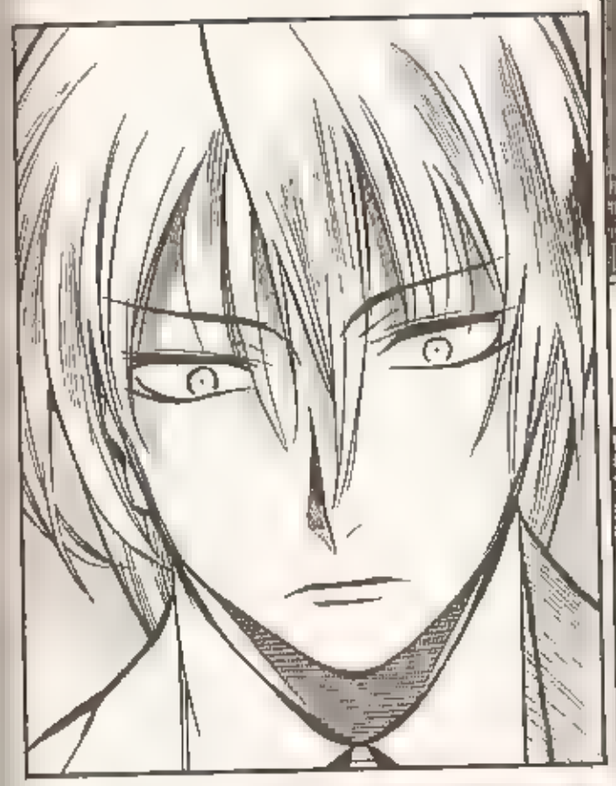
THAT'S SOME DEDICATION, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

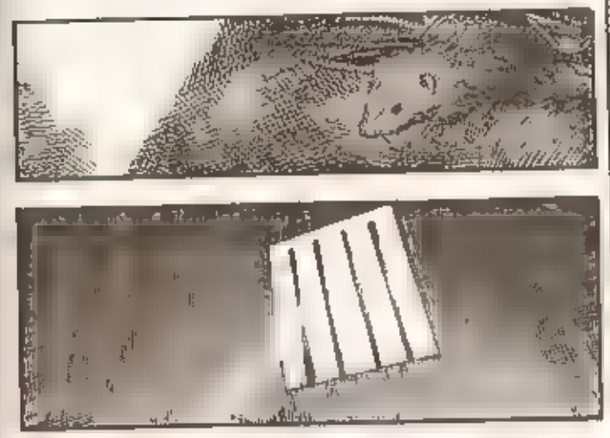
SHING

FRIENDSHIP

RIDLEY-W

EPISODE FOUR





FRIENDSHIP

RIDLEY-W

RETURN IT!

IT'S ALL I HAVE LEFT FROM MY FATHER!

NOT THAT! I BEG YOU!

WHY... WHY SUCH CRUELTY?

S O S

DEVIL!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, RIDLEY.

SADLY, IT WILL NEVER BE MADE PUBLIC.

YOUR WORK WILL FAR OUTSTRIP THAT OF THE PAPER.

YOU LOOK PLEASED.

REST ASSURED, WE WILL KEEP YOU BUSY.

...

...

...

YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND.

SPARE ME THE SMALL TALK.

THANKS TO YOU, DONNIE HAS THE WORK AND THE LOVE OF HIS DESIRE.

RIDLEY.

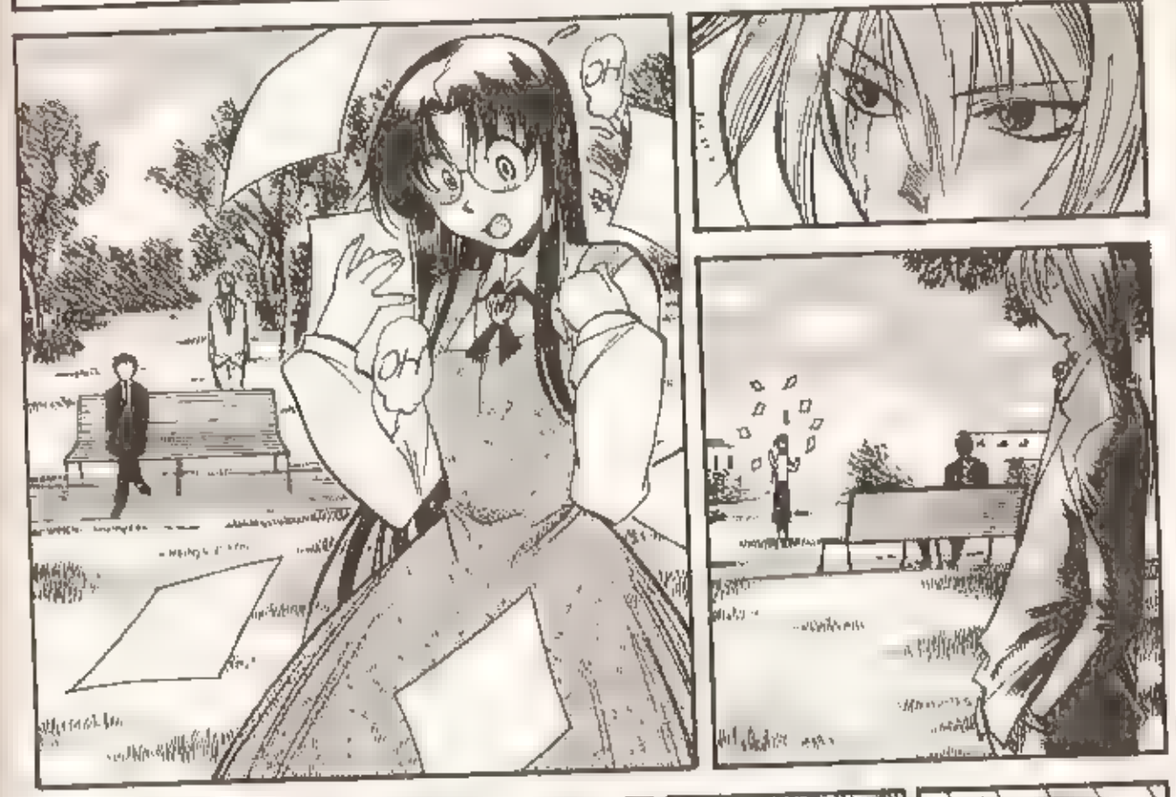
MORE OF WHAT YOU WERE MEANT TO DO.

WHAT'S MY NEXT JOB?

MURDER.

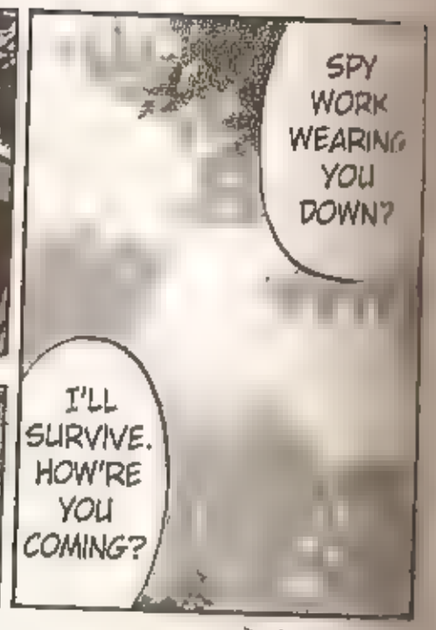
MORE OF WHAT YOU DO BEST.

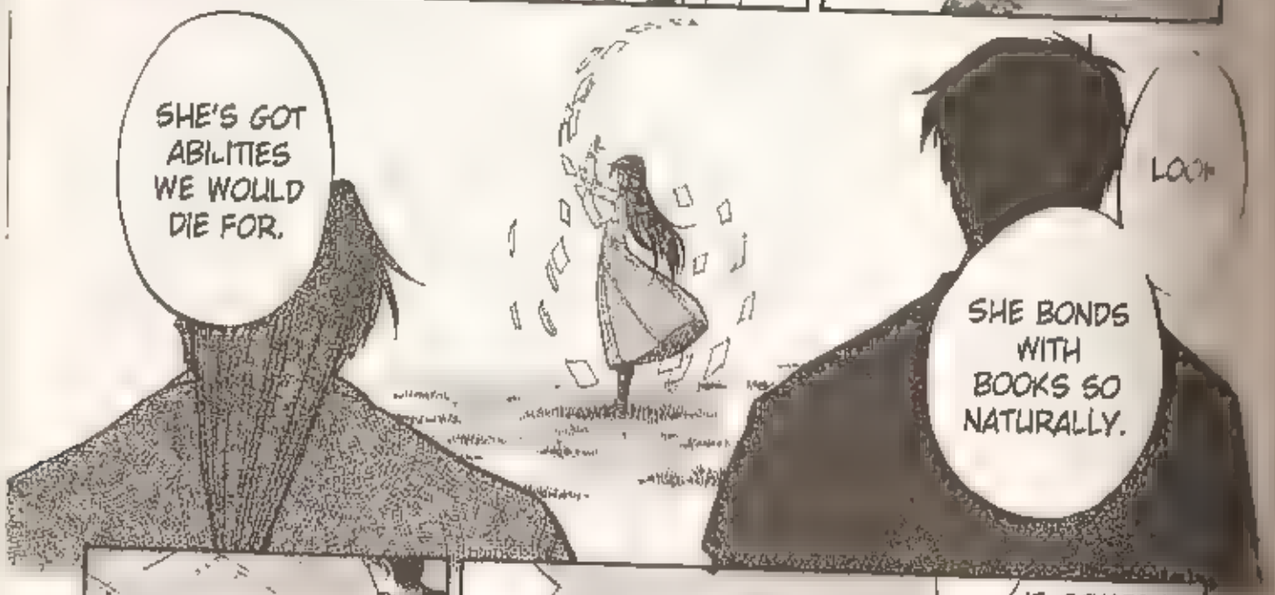
DEVIL !

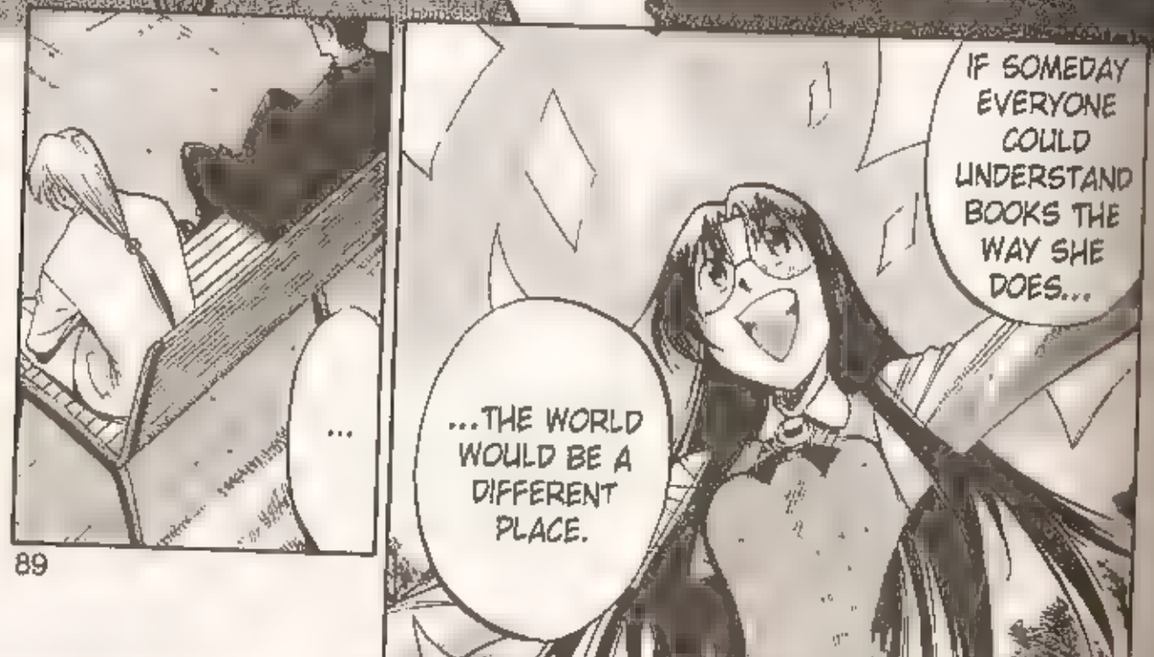


WHAT'S UP? YOU LOOK WORN OUT.
YEAH, I GUESS SO.
UH, HEY.
HEY.

IT'S AN EFFORT, BUT SHE'S GETTING THE HANG OF IT.


SPY WORK WEARING YOU DOWN?
I'LL SURVIVE. HOW'RE YOU COMING?


SHE'S GOT ABILITIES WE WOULD DIE FOR.
LOOK
SHE BONDS WITH BOOKS SO NATURALLY.


...
...THE WORLD WOULD BE A DIFFERENT PLACE.
IF SOMEDAY EVERYONE COULD UNDERSTAND BOOKS THE WAY SHE DOES...

DUM DUM DA DUM

!!

HMM ...

BLUSH

YO... YOMIKO!

...DREAM.

WHAT KIND OF WORLD THAT WOULD BE, I CAN ONLY...

DONNIE ...

SHF

NO, YOMIKO! THAT'S NOT HOW YOU DO IT.

OK. TRY AGAIN.

JUST ENVISION YOURSELF AS YOU TRULY WANT TO BE.

NO, IT'S NOT.

IT'S TOO HARD!

DONNIE.

IT WAS TOO BRIGHT FOR ME.

...CAN'T SURVIVE IN THE SUNLIGHT.

BEASTS THAT CHOOSE TO LIVE IN THE DARK...

RIDLEY ?

MAYBE IF SHE HEARS IT FROM YOU, RIDLEY ...

SHF

SHF

SHF

WHAT *ARE* YOU?

ALL MY BODY-GUARDS... WITH JUST SCRAPS OF PAPER..

SETTLE DOWN.

HFF

HFF

WHAT KIND OF...

YOU'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH.

HFF HFF

SHAMELESS PUNK.

UGH.

I'M NOT HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE A BEACON OF LIGHT IN THE WORLD.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY...FROM DARKNESS TO DARKNESS.

BEEP BEEP

RMM RMM

YOU'VE CERTAINLY DONE WELL FOR YOURSELF.

WELL, WELL ...

DIE, PUNK!

HA HA HA..

HEY, WHAT'RE YOU...

!!

!!

FWUP

!?

!?

GRAND-PA...

MMF

MMF

I'D BEEN SEEN.

BA NG BA NG

HA!

SHIT

SSS...

!

YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE?

POINK

BRR

BRR

HUH?

I CAN'T KILL SOMEONE WHO'S ALREADY DEAD.

HMPH.

YOU JUST GROW OLD, DIE AND RETURN TO THE EARTH.

CHAINED TO YOUR LIVES.

PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE JUST FODDER.

UGH

SHUP

I'LL KILL YOU!

HNN

HNN

HNN

HNN

PLEASE DON'T HURT ME.

I'LL DO WHAT-EVER YOU SAY.

I BEG YOU... PLEASE ...

!

D-DON'T HURT ME...

YOU AREN'T LIVING. YOU'RE JUST ALLOWED TO EXIST.

YOU'RE AN EMPTY BODY.

A CORPSE.

BUT I...

I WANT TO...BE ALIVE.

I...

IF SO ...

FWIP

...FIGHT FOR IT!

...BE FREE.

...I WILL NEVER...

!

FLOP

NUF

WUF

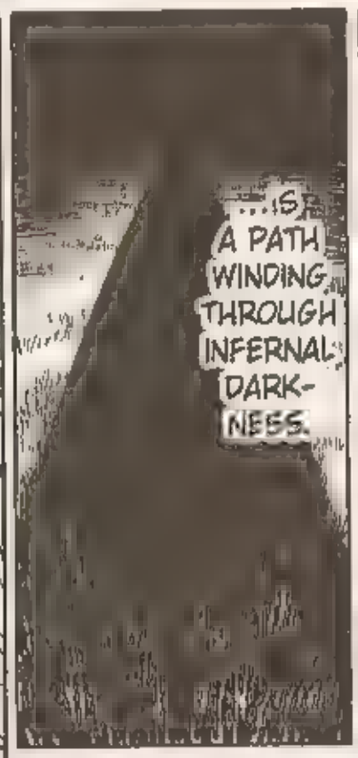
WUF

WUF

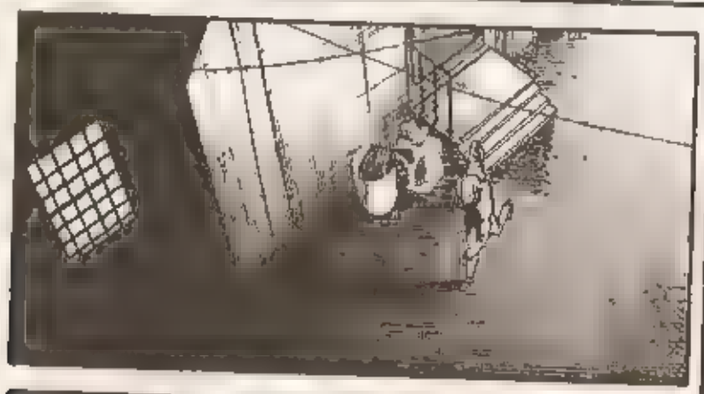
CAN'T BITE THROUGH MY CHAINS ...

IF THESE DOGS ...

BUT THERE IS...
..A LIGHT AT THE END OF THAT PATH.


...IS A PATH WINDING THROUGH INFERNAL DARK-NESS.

IN THE MOON-LIGHT, ALL I SEE...



I'LL TAKE BACK MY LIFE!!!

I MUST TALK TO HIM! HE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH!
THEN, TOGETHER ...

!
...WE CAN MAKE OUR ESCAPE!!

DEMONS WERE ON MY SIDE.

HFF

HFF

WE'D NEARLY ESCAPED.

HFF

WE'D ALMOST BROKEN THE SPELL.

DONNIE...

BA

RU MB LE

THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND!

THE PLAN WAS WORKING.

TAKE AS MANY RARE BOOKS AS YOU CAN CARRY!

FIRE! EVERYONE EVACUATE!

What's going on?

"I LOVE BOOKS."

"I THINK I'M...IN LOVE."

"YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE. EVEN JUST A SINGLE SHEET OF PAPER."

"DAMN. I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO READ THEM ALL!"

"NEVER GIVE UP. YOU CAN BECOME WHATEVER YOU WANT TO BE."

"...HAS BEEN AS WONDERFUL AS READING A MILLION BOOKS."

"RIDLEY, KNOWING YOU..."

DM

DONNIE!

WA AA A!

MDM

DONNIE ...

PLIK

YOU'R

SH

!!

AA

DONNIE...

DONNIE...

YS

SH

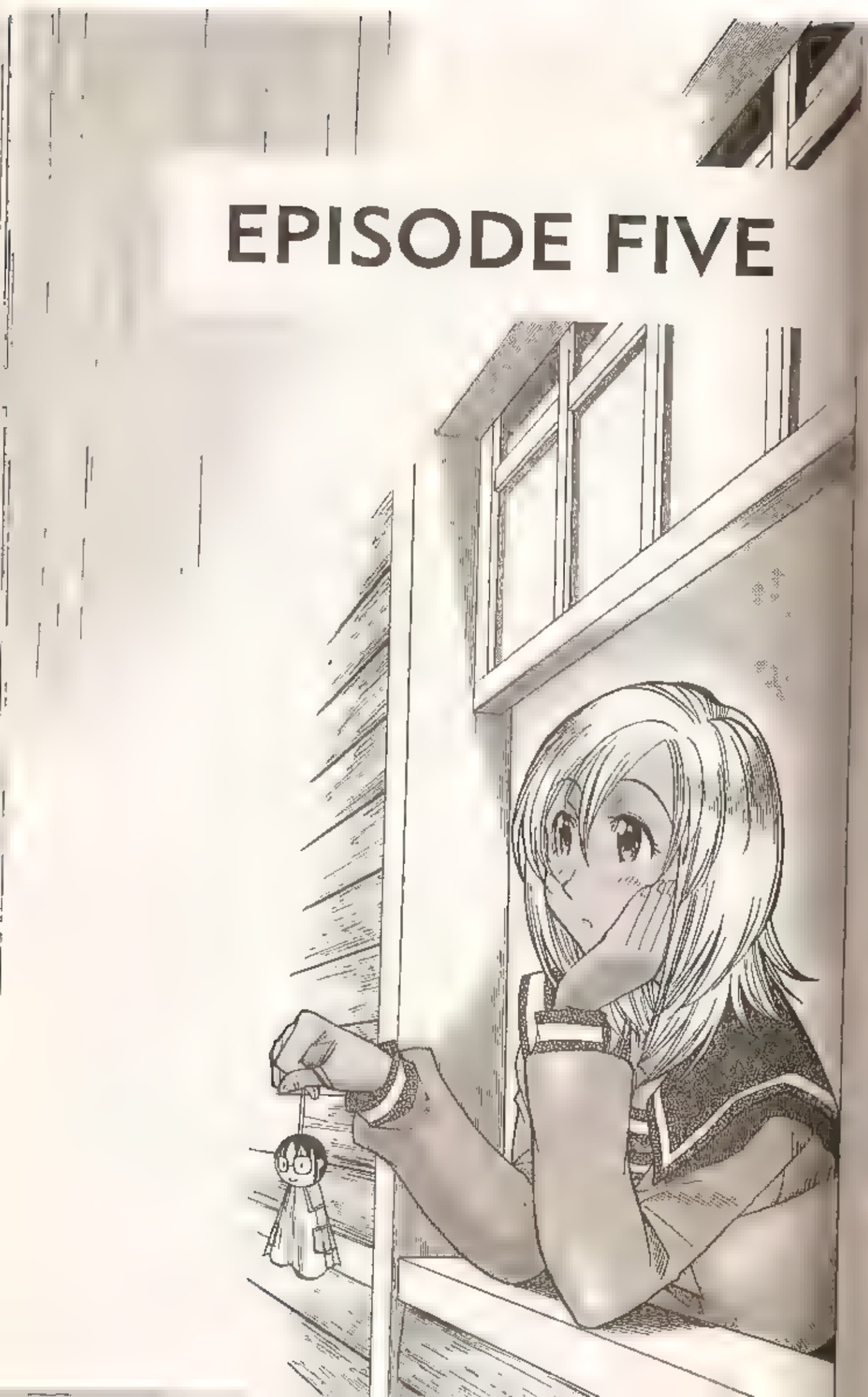
YOU'VE TAKEN EVERY-THING FROM ME...

GRR

YOU... AGAIN ...

YOU'VE TAKEN DONNIE FROM ME!

EPISODE FIVE



GO

DOM

OUR MISSION ...

NG

DOM

...IS TO REJOIN OUR FORCES QUICKLY.

DOM

"THE HATS READ *DOKU*, "TO READ."

YES, SIR!

...TO COLLECT GENTLE-MAN'S HEAD.

WE WILL CHOOSE ANOTHER DAY...

CART OUT THE RARE BOOKS.

THE LIBRARY STAFF HAS BEEN EVACUATED.

TAKE COVER !!

CONTAIN THE FIRE IN AREA C. DON'T LET IT SPREAD FURTHER.

FIRE-FIGHTER DIVISION, ASSEMBLE IN THE NORTH CORRIDOR.

BAM

BLAM

BLAM

ZEN

ZEN

ZEN

THE ANCIENTS SAY, "THE WISE MAN DOES NOT COURT DANGER."

SHOULD WE GO STRAIGHT FOR GENTLEMAN'S HEAD?

NOT SO FAST.

I DON'T KNOW WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS, BUT IT DOES PRESENT AN INTERESTING OPPORTUNITY.

HE WAS IN THE AREA OF THE MOST INTENSE FIRE. WE COULDN'T GET INSIDE.

WE HAVEN'T VERIFIED YET.

...

I SEE.

WE MUST CONSIDER THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO.

DOOM

WE'RE STILL WORKING TO ISOLATE IT.

IS THE FIRE CONTAINED ?

VERY GOOD.

THE C BLOCK WAREHOUSE IS 80% CLEARED OF BOOKS.

ALL THE RARE BOOKS IN LEVEL A AND ABOVE ARE OUT OF DANGER.

FINE.

NOW WE'D LIKE TO PRIORITIZE SAVING STAFF.

AND THE PAPER?

DOOM

CHIEF JOKER!

REMEMBER THIS.

...

GO! GO WHERE?

...WILL NEVER CHANGE.

OUR FRIENDSHIP ...

WAIT !!

DONNIE, WAIT!

DONNIE !!!

!

RIDLEY...

RI...

DONNIE ?

IS THAT YOU?

DO YOU HEAR ME, RIDLEY?

NOW I MUST GO.

THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.

RIDLEY...

I WILL ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ONE BY ONE.

I WILL SPEAK. YOU WILL LISTEN. DO NOT RESPOND.

I AM FROM THE HERMIT READER GUILD.

FIRST, WHO AM I?

!!

"HERMIT READER GUILD"?

THE FIERCE BATTLE FOR RARE BOOKS HAS SPREAD FAR AND WIDE.

WE ARE THE ARCHENEMY OF THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND.

YOUR CONFUSION IS RE-ASSURING.

!

AH, YOU'RE FINALLY AWAKE.

WH-WHERE AM I?

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

THIS I PROMISED TO COMRADE DONNIE.

!!

BLIK

BUT I WILL NOT.

HEH. I SEE YOU HAVE EVEN MORE QUESTIONS NOW.

...

YOU SHALL LIVE.

DON'T WORRY. I WILL DO NOTHING RASH.

OUR HEAD-QUARTERS.

YOU ARE NOW IN THE DOKU-BANRO, THE SANCTUARY OF 10,000 READERS.

BLUP

!?

BLUP

GLUG

GLUG

GLUG

BLUP

SH

RIDLEY WAN.

OOO

WE KNOW YOU HAVE ASSASSINATED MEN IN OUR ORDER.

GLUK

SPINK

ONE THRUST WOULD CONSOLE MY GRIEVING COMRADES.

WE AGREED TO ACCEPT HIM ON ONE CONDITION: THAT HE BRING WITH HIM THE LIBRARY'S MOST SECRET BOOK.

OF COURSE, HE TOLD US ABOUT YOUR MISSIONS AS WELL.

THE BOOK IS SAID TO BE GENTLEMAN'S PERSONAL DIARY.

OUR DEAL WAS FOR THE "BOOK OF TRUTH."

HE SAID HE WOULD BRING TWO OTHERS WITH HIM.

IT WOULD BE HIM-SELF, HIS GIRLFRIEND YOMIKO READMAN, AND...

FOR WHAT HE ASKED OF US, IT WAS A MEAGER PRICE.

...YOU.

DONNIE !!

WAF

UGH ...

UGH ...

SHF

OOF!

YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN SAVED. DON'T THROW IT AWAY NOW.

SHF

SHF

FMP

FMP

TAKE IT EASY. YOU WILL BE CONFINED TO BED UNTIL YOU HEAL.

HE HAD BECOME AWARE OF THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND.

DONNIE CONTACTED US, HOPING TO SEEK ASYLUM IN CHINA.

I WILL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED.

HRR

HRR

IN THE END, YOU WERE THE ONLY PERSON WE WERE ABLE TO SAVE. WE COULD NOT CONTACT DONNIE OR YOMIKO READMAN.

HOWEVER, THE UNEXPECTED FIRE THREW EVERYTHING INTO CONFUSION.

FIRE?

HEE HEE

HRR

!!

GRP GRP

WE BELIEVE HE IS...

FIVE DAYS HAVE PASSED, AND WE STILL HAVE NO WORD FROM HIM.

BUT DONNIE SAID IF WE DIDN'T AGREE, THE WHOLE DEAL WAS OFF.

FRANKLY, MANY WERE OPPOSED TO TAKING YOU.

RIDLEY IS AN IN-VALUABLE FRIEND. HE WILL BE WITH ME.

DONNIE WAS MILD-MANNERED, BUT ON THAT POINT HE WAS FIERCELY ADAMANT.

THE NIGHT WE RESCUED YOU, THE THREE OF YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOUR ESCAPE.

OUR MEN WERE THERE TO GUIDE YOU OUT.

!!!

THERE'S NOTHING TO THINK ABOUT!!

GLKK

HISS

HISS

PH

NO...

WE HAVE NEVER BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH A PAPER MASTER OF HIS CALIBER.

IT IS A GREAT LOSS FOR US.

WE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU UNTIL YOU RECOVER.

OUR DEAL HAS FALLEN THROUGH.

...YOUR FUTURE.

UNTIL THEN, YOU SHOULD THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT...

H

U

R

R

R

I'VE THROWN AWAY MY COUNTRY, MY NAME AND MY LIFE.

I AM A SWORD, NOTHING MORE.

USE ME AS YOU WILL.

...YOU HAVE CUT ALL TIES WITH YOUR PAST?

I ASK YOU, THEN, HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR BLADE TO PROVE...

FH

HR

WHAT IS YOUR VOW?

HEH

...I WILL JOIN YOU NOW.

IF THE HERMIT READER GUILD WILL TAKE A DEMON...

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

YOU SURE ARE A MESS ...

HMM

...

KLENK

KONG

KONG

GONG

GONG

YOU SHAMELESSLY SET YOURSELF UP AS THE NEXT PAPER.

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I HEARD OF NEW DEVELOP-MENTS IN ENGLAND.

GONG

THE NAME OF THE MAN YOU *MURDERED?*

HOW DARE YOU EVER USE THAT NAME?

KRAK KRAK

REVENGE!!! REVENGE AGAINST THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND FOR DONNIE'S MURDER!!

YOMIKO READMAN !!!

GENTLE-MAN!!!

REVENGE IS MY VOW!!!

I WILL KILL THEM ALL!!!

WHEN DONNIE WAS ALIVE, I FORCED MYSELF TO BELIEVE.

EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMED TOO PERFECT, TOO MUCH LIKE FICTION!

NO, I WANTED TO BELIEVE IT!!

YOU...

HUH?

ALL THE WHILE, YOU WERE TRYING AGAIN...

...TO ESCAPE YOUR CRIME!

AND YOU ...

YOU MAKE ME WANT TO PUKE!

GRP

YOU JUST HAD TO DIG UP THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY!

STOP IT!!

AND, LIKE AN ASS, I LET HIM.

I BELIEVED IN DONNIE'S ILLUSIONS. I DIDN'T CHECK YOUR BACK-GROUND.

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU SEDUCED HIM, BUT HE LOVED YOU.

TRUTH IS...IT WAS ONLY BY CHANCE THAT I EVER MET YOU.

DOOM

DOOM DOOM

BYE.

WHAT ABOUT DONNIE?

DONNIE...

SHU

OUR SECRET TRYST MUST BURN HIM TO HIS CORE!!

FAR AWAY IN THAT OTHER WORLD, HE IS WRITHING IN AGONY!

DON'T AVERT YOUR EYES!!

DON'T COVER YOUR EARS!!

DON'T MAKE EXCUSES!!

KRK

OHHH...

OH... OH...

KRUSH

AH...

AH.

DONNIE.

BLUSH

DONNIE.

AUGH...

GAH!

YOU CAN'T THINK HE'S ALIVE.

YOU KILLED HIM YOUR-SELF.

MURDERER..

B-DMP

B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP

B-DMP B-DMP B-DMP

B-DMP

YOMIKO.

...KO.

YOMIKO!

DONNIE...

DONNIE!

AAAUGH!

EPISODE SIX

UNITED STATES SEVENTH FLEET

SOME-WHERE ON THE PACIFIC OCEAN

THAT CERTAINLY IS A STRANGE DATA IMAGE. CHECK INTO IT AND REPORT BACK!

YES, SIR!

GEEZ!

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

SHUF

SHUF

IT WOULD STRAIN FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

IT'D BE UNWISE TO INCREASE DEFENSE SPENDING IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE.

PRIME MINISTER! AN URGENT MESSAGE JUST ARRIVED FROM THE FUJI WEATHER OBSERVA-TORY!

LOOK!

THE OPPOSITION PARTY WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY.

FOOM

!!!

WHAT IS IT?

IS IT THAT A TYPHOON ?

MT. FUJI WEATHER OBSER-VATION STATION

SAME TIME

WHAT COULD IT BE?

BETTER CALL THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, TOO.

CONTACT THE METEOR-OLOGICAL AGENCY.

NO. IT'S TOO BIG...AND THERE'S NO WIND.

WHAT IS THAT?

WHAT CAN IT POSSIBLY BE?

INNER CHAMBER OF THE CABINET

SAME TIME

SHA

WHAT THE HELL IS IT?

SHA

SHA

EPISODE SIX

DRAKE!

CHOOF

WENDY!

WHERE IS SHE?

SUP-PORT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

KLAP

DAMN. I'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND HER.

HUH?

I GUESS SHE'S ON CAMPUS, BUT...

AAA

WAIT...

WHAT DO WE DO?

THE EARTH-QUAKE. IT'S...

H-HOW'S S-SAYING THAT GOING TO H-HELP?

SHA

WE'RE D-DONE FOR IF WE STAY HERE LIKE TH-THIS.

GSSH...

...ENDING.

...

THE BIGGEST YET.

THAT WAS A BIG ONE.

NOW I HOLD ALL THE CARDS.

ALL THE INGREDIENTS TO DRAW OUT THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY.

D

O

O

M

DREAM-LIKE JOY.

BURNING ANGER.

ULTIMATE PLEA-SURE.

INCOM-PARABLE SORROW.

HUHN

HUHN

PLEASURE AND SORROW. PERFECT.

...

HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED ?

!

HUH?

GO BACK TO THE SCHOOL WITH THE OTHER STUDENTS.

I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

D O O M

COME OUT NOW, UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY!

ALL RIGHT!

GRRM

COME FOR THINE OFFERING.

THOU WHO CONSUME KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN PATHOS.

SHOW YOURSELF TO US!

BOOF

THANK YOU...

...YO-MIKO.

DRK

HA HA HA HA HA!

SH F

HEE HEE!

THEN KILL MAN-KIND!

COME MEET MAN-KIND.

LOVE MAN-KIND.

THIS ENDLESS HELL ON EARTH IS WHERE YOU BELONG!

FEAST ON THE VERY LIFE OF MANKIND!!

BAM

BA

KNOW-LEDGE.

PATHOS.

BAM

RYY

RYY

RYY

THAT'S IT!

BAM

BAM

BAM

COME ON OUT!

COME FULFILL YOUR INSATI-ABLE APPETITE!

YOU WON'T FIND IT IN THE COLD DARK GROUND.

DOOM

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, GENTLE-MAN.

——

IT'S UN-FORTUNATE YOU CAN'T BE HERE TO WITNESS IT.

...YES.

IT'S HARD PUT INTO WORDS.

...YES.

WE WILL NOW MOVE INTO SECOND PHASE OF THE STRATEGY.

...THE SCENE UNFOLDING BEFORE MY EYES.

WORDS JUST CAN'T DESCRIBE ...

DRAMA

...BEAUTIFUL.

IF ONE WORD COULD DESCRIBE IT, IT'S...

...WELL...

GRRR

SSS

SSS

SHHF

SHHF

WHAT IS IT?

HOW THE HECK SHOULD I KNOW?

THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY!

SSSSSS

WHOA!

WH-WHAT IS THAT?

BAM

...LIBRARY?

BAM

UNDER-GROUND...

KROOOSH

HA HA HA!

AT LAST THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY AWAKENS.

THE RENAISSANCE DESERVES A HEARTY CELEBRATION.

WAIT HERE. I WILL RETURN.

I MUST SEE HIS PLEASURE UPON RETURNING ABOVE-GROUND.

SHF SHF SHF

IT'S NOT TIME TO KILL YOU YET.

YOU WILL BE THE MAIN DISH!

SHF

D·N

UNTIL THEN, WALLOW IN YOUR DESPAIR.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, ESCAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Shoosh

DONNIE !!

...FORGIVE ME FOR TAKING YOUR FORM AGAIN.

TO THE LIBRARY THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES FOREVER, I WILL DELIVER...

POI NK

DONNIE...

SHF SHF

BW AW

...A HAMMER BLOW!

CHAK

GOTCHA. WE'LL BE DONE IN HALF AN HOUR.

KAZUTO, TAKE HALF THE STUDENTS AROUND THE LEFT FLANK. HUNT THEM ALL DOWN!

CHAK

CHAK

FOR THE RESURRECTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND A NEW WORLD!

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

NOW FOR THE FIRST OFFERING.

SHF

I'M GOING.

...

KRAK

WHAT'S WITH YOU?

HEY! WHAT'S THE MATTER?

PFFT. USE-LESS...

SHWAK

CLICK

HERE!

NOW HURRY UP AND SNAP OUT OF IT.

...

THERE YOU ARE!

WELL, WELL.

CHAK

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT'S THAT PILE OF PAPER?

HMPH.

THUNK

WHAT?

THE BOOK...

I CAN'T READ IT.

BRR BRR

I... CAN'T... READ.

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN ?

!?

IT'S A *BOOK*, DAMMIT!

YOU DON'T WANT TO READ IT?

SO THAT'S THE LIBRARY THEY TALKED ABOUT.

WENDY AND THE STUDENTS ARE STILL ALIVE IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

THERE'S NO WAY TO GET THEM OUT SAFELY.

HUH ?

HOW THE HELL ARE WE GOING TO REIN THAT THING IN?

!!

GULP.

GRLP.

PAPER, WHAT'S WRONG?

PASH

HEY !!

BRRRRRR

EPISODE SEVEN

NOOO!

AUGH!

BAM

BAM

WAAH!

KE

AHH...

TEACHER'S ORDERS.

EVERY-ONE FOLLOW ME CALMLY.

I HATE BOOKS!

BOOKS ...

BOOKS ...

YO... YOMIKO...

SW

A

SS

WAA AAA !!!

YOU THERE!

KAZUTO'S WITH THE B STUDENTS!

CHK CHK

WHO'S THAT?

SOME-BODY GET A HANKY!

PILE UP A BARRICADE!

THE A STUDENTS ARE OUT OF THEIR MINDS!

BUT... WILL SHE WANT TO HELP US?

HELP? WHO CAN HELP?

I CAN CALL FOR HELP.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

!!

OKAY. HERE'S WHAT I SAY TO DO.

HARADA!

HURRY !!!

EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL-HOUSE!

SHU!!

HHH

HHH

JUST TRY TO GET AWAY!!

TH OMP

ANYONE WHO CAN MOVE, HELP MAKE A BARRICADE!

GIRLS, HELP THE INJURED!

SH OO D

!!!

STOMP

...THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY IS FINALLY MOVING.

SO...

HEE HEE HEE...

THE BATTLE IS NEAR.

YES?

IRAKA!

...CAN BE ADDED TO THE "BREAKFAST."

SCUM STUDENTS LIKE THIS...

D

O

M

O

WHO ARE YOU?

DA

JUST A PASSING MERCENARY.

EPISODE SEVEN

ALL RIGHT, THEN.

GR RP

UGH...

HEY! WH... WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

QUIET!

HAH

!?

I SAID...

...SHUT UP!

I'LL HUNT THEM DOWN, EVERY LAST ONE!

ZOO SH

THAT THING HAS A HUGE APPETITE.

WE'RE STILL FAR SHORT.

SPNK

SH SH SH

I EXPECT NOTHING LESS.

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW, IRAKA.

WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, WE SHALL WED.

TEACHER...

CHING

...YES.

AAAAUGH!

SHF

NOT TOO TASTY, BUT DEFINITELY FRESH.

—!!

—!!

FILL YOUR BRAIN WITH KNOWLEDGE SOUP!

DRINK UP!

GRRK!

GRRK!

SHZZ

SHZZ

SHZZ

FEEDING TIME!

AH!

BOOSH

SHK

SHK

SHK

!?

!?

YOU KNOW SOME-THING, DON'T YOU?

I-I MEAN ...

UM...

GLOMP

HUH? NENENE!

YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS.

ARE YOU IN LEAGUE WITH YOMIKO?

YOU ARE, AREN'T YOU? ANSWER ME, WENDY!

TELL ME.

PLEASE.

IS THIS ALL WE'RE GONNA DO?

CHUFF

WHO KNOWS ?

YEAH, WE SHOULD DO SOME-THING.

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BELIEVE THAT GUY.

WILL WE REALLY BE OKAY JUST WAITING AROUND?

THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY ...

DRAKE, PLEASE...

WHAT'S THAT?

IS IT BECAUSE THE SCHOOL IS COVERED IN PAPER?

COULD BE.

OH, I SEE.

THAT'S HOW YOU COMMUNICATE WITH JOKER?

BUT FIRST WE HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO SAVE THE STUDENTS.

JOKER MAY NOT LIKE IT.

I CAN'T MAKE CONTACT.

...

WHAT ABOUT YOMIKO?

DAK

WENDY, COME BACK!

UH...

WELL...

I CAN'T.

I CAN'T!

I'M SORRY.

WENDY?

WOULDJA TELL ME WHAT THE SITUATION IS?

YOMIKO!

DAK

I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT'S EATING HER.

WHY?

THEY SAY YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THE STUDENTS.

EL

NGH

THE B STUDENTS ARE IN GRAVE DANGER!

WHY IS THAT?

EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR YOU! PLEASE HURRY!

!

HUFF

PLEASE, YOMIKO!

...

YOMIKO?

THERE SHE IS.

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE PAPER LIKE THIS.

SHE'S BEEN LIKE THAT SINCE I FOUND HER.

POIK

SEE? NOTHING.

THE MISSION'S FAILED.

GRP

HOLD THIS IN YOUR HAND!

YOU ARE THE PAPER!

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, YOMIKO!

I... I CAN'T READ BOOKS ANY-MORE.

I CAN'T USE PAPER.

I CAN'T DO ANY-THING.

I CAN'T HELP ANY-ONE.

YOMIKO...

WHAT?

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

DON'T DO ANYTHING TO ME!!!

DON'T MAKE ME DO ANY-THING!!!

PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

IDIOT !!!

WITH YOU LIKE THIS, WE CAN'T COMPLETE OUR MISSION.

AND I CAN'T CONTACT JOKER FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

ME!

ALL OF US!

WE'RE WAITING FOR YOU!

BOOKS !!!

TCH TCH

WA K

STOP!

BH

M

A

A

A

A

H

O

O

SHP

SHP

SHP

SHUP

KLIK

SO...

...UNTIL I CAN, I'LL HANDLE IT *MY* WAY.

FOOM!

WHAT WENDY SAID WAS TRUE.

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU, TOO.

GR

A

H

YES, SIR.

A

A

A

EVERY-THING HAS PROCEEDED AS PLANNED.

CONTINUE TO INFORM ME OF ALL DEVELOP-MENTS.

SHUF

HA HA...

HA HA HA...

HUFF ...

HUFF ...

HUFF ...

CONGRATU-LATIONS, MR. GENTLEMAN.

BRRR

LEAVE ME.

...

THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND'S STRATEGY HAS...

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?

WHAT ?

HAS IT APPEARED YET? THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY?

GET OUT.

You Know All of Me

PUT IT DOWN.

IT'LL TURN ROTTEN IF YOU TOUCH IT NOW.

IT'S SUMI-REGAWA ...

...IENENE.

I'LL HAVE IT THIS TIME...

...NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.

IT'S SO LONG AGO NOW.

BUT WHEN YOU RESCUED ME...

...I DON'T THINK I EVER TOLD YOU...

...HOW HAPPY YOU MADE ME FEEL.

I...I'M JUST A NORMAL PERSON WITH NO SPECIAL POWERS.

TEACH-ER...

SOME OF THE STUDENTS ARE EVEN FANS OF MY BOOKS.

THAT'S WHY I BECAME A STUDENT HERE.

I DIDN'T COME TO ASK FOR HELP.

SORRY.

EXCUSE ME, I...

I CAME TO SAY GOOD-BYE.

HUH?

I'M NOT SURE WHY.

EVERY-ONE'S WAITING FOR ME.

WELL, I'M GOING NOW.

AH!

BUT IF SOMEONE WAS IN DANGER, I THINK I'D DO MY BEST TO HELP.

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT POWERS YOU HAVE.

IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

IT'S JUST HUMAN NATURE.

NENENE!

CLICK

DRIP

DRIP

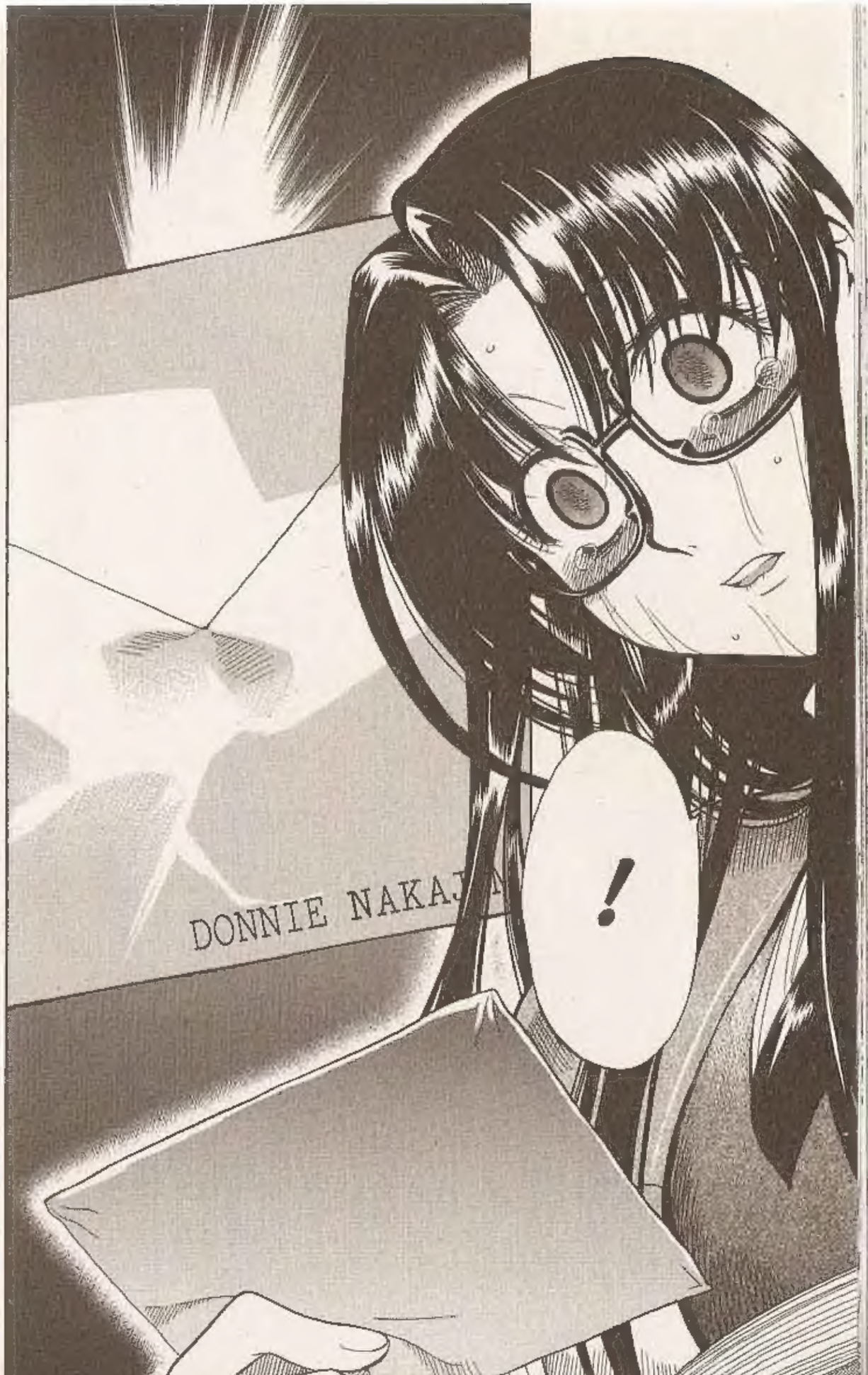
!

AH!

AHH...

GOODBYE.

MY FAVORITE TEACHER.


DONNIE NAKAJ
!

I am sure many of you noticed that each ***R.O.D.*** cover features some ***fun artwork***. Hey, did you notice?

This volume's drawing is a play on Akira Toriyama's ***Dr. Slump***, the second volume was Bronson and Hara Tetsuo's ***Fist of the North Star***, and the first volume was Akimoto Osamu's ***Kochikame!***[7] Yes, 33-year-old me and 28-year-old Yamaaki spent our childhoods poring over books, laughing, crying, and having our very beings rocked by the ***golden writers*** of ***Shonen Jump***. Frightening, isn't it? But we really wanted to do this since ***R.O.D.*** is bigger than pocketbook size. The new publication size begged for a new type of cover. When schoolboys pass the book around, the dust jacket will no doubt get lost and the pages of the book become ***completely ragged***, but the covers will survive! Among the several thousand copies piled up at used bookstores and book fairs, those covers will remain, ripped and covered with dirt like a ***warrior bent on fulfilling a mission***. That's right: we did it out of love for those great covers of the past! Please forgive our perverse adoration.

I also want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who helped with these volumes, the managing editors, and Yamaaki and designer Jinguji.

Uh oh...still more space to fill. Oh, yeah, I recently saw the dubbing for the anime of Volume Three. My jaw hangs wider each time I see the ***mind-numbingly*** high-quality artwork, and this time it flopped open and wobbled around like it was going to swallow my body like a ***vanilla ice cream cone***. Those guys are merciless! Just when I was thinking I couldn't wait to see the final product, someone from Sony came up to me and said they wanted me to come upstairs for a secret meeting.

To be continued...

5. ***Tantei Monogatari*** (Detective Story) was a Japanese TV series that ran from 1979-80.

6. Hideyuki is referring to the Japanese edition of ***R.O.D.*** Volume Three, which included an illustration of Yomiko as Arale, the heroine of Akira Toriyama's manga ***Dr. Slump*** (now available from VIZ Media!).

7. All of these titles are well-loved manga from the 1980s. ***Fist of the North Star*** is an ultra-violent martial-arts series. ***Kochikame*** (a nickname for the full title, which translates as ***This Is the Police Station in Front of Kameari Park in Katsushika***) is a police comedy that has been running in ***Shonen Jump*** magazine since 1976.

1. OVA: Original Video Adaptation, or direct-to-video anime.

2. American pro wrestler Terry Funk Jr. was very popular in Japan during the 1980s.

3. ***Hakushon Daimao*** (Giant Sneeze Demon) was a TV anime in the 1960s. In the American version, the sneeze demon was named Hasshoo.

4. This is a reference to Sachiyo Nomura, the much-disliked wife of baseball manager Katsuya Nomura. She was arrested in 2001 for tax evasion.

ULTRA ULTRA READER KING YOMIOH

SPECIAL STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS RAMBLINGS UPON THE RELEASE OF VOLUME THREE.

By Kurata Hideyuki

Whoa! ***Back again already?*** Hey, check out this awesome layout. This is Kurata Hideyuki, who, for the first time since this feature started, is feeling cold shivers, bafflement, excitement and tenderness like ***half a Bufferin***, all at the same time. Just kidding! I'm as relaxed as when I handed in the original manuscript. ***Where's my medicine?***

Wouldn't you know it? Just when the serial version of ***R.O.D.*** in ***Ultra Jump*** magazine comes to an end, the anime OVA[1] goes on sale and you know you gotta have it! This column is like ***Terry Funk Jr.*** coming back for one last bout[2] and is packed with more text than ever. Like Hasshoo, the Sneeze Genie.[3] Call him and he jumps out! This may be as far as you read when you find out the truth: I'm not revealing any new stuff. But there's still two and a half hours 'til deadline. I'm trying not to panic! I gotta just let the words spill out to fill up all this space. ***Sachiyo, arrested!***[4]

This feels like a live report, though you probably won't be reading it 'til much later. It is now March 6, 2001, at 2:30 and 25 seconds, exactly! Hey, I gotta run out and get the ***Detective Story*** DVD box set that goes on sale today![5] I think I'll ***somehow*** be able to push myself to watch the whole series.

I thought, in a sort of '80s style way, ***Hey yeah, it'd be cool to write like this***. Hey, beloved reader, you should've been writing this from the start. What were you thinking? You should apologize, do some serious soul-searching, and for your crime commit ***suicide in heaven!*** For which I say thank you, thank you. Now I'm really feeling the pressure.

Okay, everyone, slip off the dust jacket of this book and take a look at the cover.[6] Yep, there she is, the idol and heroine in glasses making her mark on manga history! ***A cheap imitation!*** If you leave this volume on the curb, some kid walking by is sure to shout, ***"Arale-chan!"*** and pick it up. Okay, all right, ***all right!***